

Is it nothing to you?

"Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?

behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." -Lamentations 1:12

I was sickened by the Chicago Sun-times on Saturday, September 28th, 2002!

As I read this particular Saturday's newspaper, I ran across a small article on the upper left corner of page #14 which read, **"690 die in ferry disaster."** Later reports revealed that over 900 people actually drowned to death out of the 1,034 passengers total. The tragedy occurred in Dakar, Africa on Thursday the 26th when a ferry ship (the MS Joola) capsized off the West African coast. The newspapers reported that hundreds of screams could be heard through the bottom of the ship as nearly 1,000 souls perished. Helpless relatives stood along the coastline, weeping and some even falling to the ground because their knees gave out under shock and horror. You can read more [HERE](#) and [HERE](#) (from the *Chicago Daily Southtown Newspaper*). Unfortunately, I couldn't find the Dakar disaster in the Sun-times archives (even a couple weeks after the article was printed). I guess they only save important news clips (as if 900 people dying isn't important enough to preserve the article). Unbelievable!

Furthermore, The accident was horrible enough in itself, but not nearly as horrible as the fact that no one really seemed to care at the time (nor at any time). How could such a tragic accident only make page 14 of the Chicago Sun-times? The sickest thing to me was what did make the front page of the Sun-times on September 28th, 2002-- A full-page photo and article of Tiger Woods playing golf!!! I was saddened to realize that people are caring less and less each and every day in this country. Have we become so insensitive and selfish as Americans that we just don't care anymore? For many, apparently so!!!

I have not stopped grieving for the families of those victims in Dakar. I realize that not everyone is blessed to live in the United States (with all of our emphasis upon safety). Unfortunately, we are fast becoming complacent (and therefore increasingly vulnerable) as a nation. It is a dangerous thing when a nation's citizens become indifferent to the misery, hardship and ill-fate of others. When a major newspaper (the Chicago Sun-times, 09-28-2002) chooses to report a sporting event on the front cover instead of the deaths of 690 people, something is VERY WRONG.

Our nation has made sporting events a god, an idol. Is golf more important than the lives of 690 people? Though some people claim that sports is an "escape" from the harshness of reality (and I will agree to a limited degree), one still has to accept the fact of reality that we simply cannot turn a blind eye nor deaf ear to the world in which we live. It is a SIN to live a selfish, self-centered life. Unfortunately, this

is exactly what most people are doing...living for #1--self. As Believers, we should NOT allow sporting events to dominate our hearts and minds. We must place obeying the Word of God and serving the Lord Jesus Christ first in our daily lives. I could not help but wonder how many of those people who died in Dakar were truly born-again Believers? I dare say a dozen (only God and the people which died know for certain). Since the accident in Dakar, my heart has been more concerned about the salvation of the people in my life. I have spent more time in my Bible. You see friend, the world wants to have fun and "party" all the time...they care not for your soul, not mine. We must rise ABOVE mediocrity, indifference and apathy if we are to live for Jesus. We should care!

A Bible Lesson

The children of Israel had sinned against the Lord. Jeremiah, the prophet, had been sent by God to warn the Israelites to either repent or face certain judgment and doom. The Israelites spit in God's face and continued in their rebellion and sin. In Jeremiah 25:11, Jeremiah pronounces impending judgment upon Jerusalem because of their stubbornness and unwillingness to turn back to God. Now it is too late to avert judgment, Babylon WILL conquer Jerusalem and dominate the Israelites for 70 years.

Nevertheless, God in His mercy still offered hope to Israel through the prophet Jeremiah. If the people of Jerusalem would simply surrender to King Nebuchadnezzar's military forces from Babylon, all would be well. The people of Jerusalem would have been allowed to remain in Israel,

in their homes, serving the King of Babylon from Jerusalem. However, the Israelites were a stubborn and stiff-necked people. They imprisoned Jeremiah for preaching God's Word and left him for dead below the city. They refused to surrender, calling Jeremiah a heretic and liar.

King Nebuchadnezzar (the heathen Babylonian king), had heard about Jeremiah's preaching and spared Jeremiah's life when Jerusalem was invaded for the final time in 586 B.C. Babylon was brutal upon Jerusalem. King Zedekiah's daughters and wives were raped and taken into captivity, his sons were executed by sword in front of his own eyes and then Zedekiah's eyes were burned out of his head by the Babylonian soldiers. How tragic were all these events, yet the most tragic thing was that all this could have been easily avoided had Israel simply obeyed the Word of God.

Upon Babylon's final invasion of Jerusalem, the city is totally destroyed and burned to the ground. The women are ravished and killed, children are slain in the streets, men are slaughtered everywhere. The mighty men are executed. The remnants of the wealth of Israel is harvested from the city. At its end, only the very poor, sick and elderly are left in the city, including Jeremiah. Jeremiah sits in the smoldering ash heaps of what was once the city of God's people and weeps bitterly because of what has happened to the people. In the days to follow, Jeremiah notices that the remaining people don't seem too concerned about what has happened. He speaks aloud and asks the sobering question, "**Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?**" Basically, Jeremiah asks, "don't you care at all?" How tragic! How sad! And no one really seemed to care what had happened. Is this where America is headed? Is it anything to

us?

I will not say that God was bringing judgment upon those folks in Dakar, I simply believe it was an accident. I do however believe that Jesus has some powerful words for us on the matter. Luke 13: 2-5, "And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

What was Jesus saying? He was simply telling all His listeners (including you and I) that death oftentimes comes SUDDENLY and WITHOUT WARNING!!! (then the judgment, Hebrews 9:27). Death is a certainty in life (and higher taxes). These folks in Luke 13 didn't know what hit them because it all happened so fast. The point is that if you die in your sins, you will go straight to hell and be tormented forever in damnation when you die. Do you want this to happen? Of course you don't! It can be avoided!!!

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